

Update - design plans for the Silver Spring Library

- **Please provide an update on the design plans for Silver Spring. Please specifically address the community concerns that have been raised regarding the library entrance and escalator, and whether these concerns can be addressed.**

In response to the requirement to begin the utility relocation work early in order to prepare the site for construction, the design schedule has been modified from a typical project schedule.

At present, we have finished the Schematic Design (SD) and submitted the project for M-NCPPC Mandatory Referral (MR), usually done later in the design process.

We needed MR and the related Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) approvals in order to file and obtain permits for the first phase of construction, which is the “Utility Relocation Package”. This work will relocate sewer, storm and other utilities which currently cross the site and which must be relocated before the library can begin.

We received our MR and FCP approvals and subsequently permits necessary to start the utility work. The groundbreaking for this work occurred on August 30th. This work is scheduled to take approximately 10 months to complete.

At the end of the SD process, we obtained estimates of the construction cost of the building. The project as designed is over the amount requested in the last CIP budget. While we are optimistic that the market conditions will offer savings of up to 10%, we cannot count on that alone and are proactively managing the design process to include a variety of strategies to bring the project in on budget. In this process we have been careful to avoid options that might adversely impact the library program.

One strategy is to identify design elements that can be substituted with less costly alternatives without severe impact to the approved design. One such example is substituting a more conventional glass curtain wall for the structural glazing at the Fenton Street entrance. Design upgrades can still be included in the construction solicitation as add-alternates that may be reincorporated into the design should market conditions be favorable.

Another strategy is to reduce the amount of un-programmed space, such as building support and circulation space. These options included:

- reducing the floor-to-floor height of the library floors from 20 ft to 18 ft, which will still allow for a comfortable ceiling height
- eliminating the 3-story escalator, replacing it with 2 elevators, thereby reducing the size of the entry pavilion
- relocating the meeting rooms to a lower floor, thereby reducing the area of emergency egress stairs

- reducing the amount of County office space or eliminating this floor altogether. Under this option the space can be designed so that at the time of bid a decision can be made to include all the finished space, include it as unfinished space, accept some reduction in the size of the space, or eliminate the floor altogether as a deduct-alternate.

DGS and Library staff met with the community to discuss these options. The community clearly indicated its support of the escalators, which are now in the building design. The community didn't express preference for or rejection of any of the other savings options. As design progresses the architect will continue to look for ways to reduce the cost of the building while retaining the design and community preferences. The resulting modified design will be re-estimated and a decision will be made to continue to value engineer the design or to move ahead to complete the project.

- **Please describe the current plans for identifying occupants for the library café, other retail space, and the arts space in the building.**

The business occupants of the coffee bar, to be located on the ground floor of the Fenton Street entrance, will be determined by response to a RFP to be issued in the future. The solicitation for a coffee bar/café will be issued under the Local Small Business Reserve program under which only qualifying local businesses may compete for a contract.

Pyramid Atlantic (PA), the arts use currently planned to be located in the building was selected through an RFP process completed in 2009. Space requirements have been determined and a full POR is being developed. PA has a requirement for classrooms, artist studios, administrative support, and a galley/retail store to be located on the ground floor to activate the street. The architect has met with PA to review some preliminary designs. A Letter of Intent (LOI) is currently being prepared and negotiated with PA.

- **Please provide an update on disability access to the library as reflected in the current design and site development.**

Currently the access to the Library Building is provided at three locations.

The primary entrance is at Wayne Avenue. A bus stop is located in front of the entrance and the Wayne Avenue garage is across the street. At the garage, parking will be set aside for patrons of the library and additional parking for the disabled will be provided close to the elevator bank closest to the library entrance. All library patrons will take the elevators to the ground floor, exit the garage, turn left and travel to the corner, cross Wayne, and travel to the Library Building entrance.

The Fenton Street entrance will include escalators, a stair and one elevator. A bus stop is located on Fenton Street near this entrance.

A vehicular drop-off is located at the west side of the building along the service drive. This provides a ramped entrance to the main lobby of the building. The drop off is covered and is immediately adjacent to where the Metro-Access bus will stop.